

## **Jaguar Conservation Team (JAGCT) Summary Notes**

Douglas, Arizona

August 4, 2005

### Introduction

Terry Johnson, Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD), called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. All in attendance introduced themselves and the organizations they represented.

#### A. Opening comments and ground rules

Ground rules were the same as previous meetings. Participants were asked to raise their hand to ask a question or state an opinion. Only one person was allowed to speak and side conversations were kept to a minimum. This allowed each person to be heard and kept the meeting moving through the agenda. Participants in the Jaguar Working Group (JAGWG) (i.e. everyone present at JAGCT meetings) may comment and are encouraged to do so on any issue being discussed at the JAGCT meeting. Participants were asked to turn cellular telephones and beepers off or set to vibrate.

#### B. Agenda Review/Additional Discussion Points

No additions presented.

#### C. Discussion of summary notes from the January 2005 JAGCT meeting

The January 2005 summary notes have been delayed because of changeover in personnel within the AGFD and paternity leave of the next-line process owner responsible for the notes. No action items were discussed relative to the January meeting.

**Action Item:** The New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (NMDGF) will assist AGFD in recording draft meeting notes during future meetings.

#### D. Task Reports:

##### 1. Update on AZ-NM sightings – Tim Snow and Jim Stuart

New Mexico – There were no reported sightings in New Mexico.

**Action Item:** Follow-up report on a 1994 sighting from Steins, NM submitted in September 2004 by the Center for Biological Diversity (Center).

Arizona – There were 16 sightings reported since the last meeting. Four of the reports were for animals observed in previous years or were tracks only. Nine were reported as black (grey, darker than a javelina to glossy black) cats, and 6 were spotted animals. One Class I, 4 Class II, and 11 Class III. No action could be performed on eight of the sightings

and 8 were investigated further either by an AGFD employee, the reporting party, or a third party.

Class <sup>1</sup>	Date	Location	Comments
III-2	Feb	Patagonia	Solid black, 60 lbs; Reported late
III-2	Feb	Douglas	Black, lots of tracks; Only dog tracks found
III-2,4	Feb	West of Tubac	Report vague, dark and not like a lion; Reported late.
II-7	Sept 88/89	White Mtns	Reported in February 2005
III-2	Feb	Catalina Foothills	Reported too late for investigation
III-2	Mar	St David	Black; 6 times in last 2-3 yrs; Reporting party placing camera
III-2	Mar	Dragoon Mtns	Black; large tracks observed by 3 <sup>rd</sup> party
III-2	Apr	Tucson	Black; too small for jaguar; no investigation
II-5	Apr	Mexico, North of Caborca	3 <sup>rd</sup> party report from USFWS; not confirmed
II-7,8	Apr	Baboquivari Mtns	Photo of tracks observed; No confirmation
III-2	May	Sonoita	Multiple sightings of black cat; Wildlife Manager respond
III-2	May	San Pedro	Reporting party changed report to jaguarondi; No investigation
III-2	June	Tucson Mtn Park	50-60 lbs, smaller than German Shepard; No investigation
III-2	July	Tortolita Foothills	Black, b/w bobcat & mtn lion; Wildlife Manager respond
II-7	July	Santa Rita Mtns	Spotted, bigger than lab; Reported too late for investigation
I-8	June/July	South of Tucson	E. McCain tracks verified; Photos of male jaguar

<sup>1</sup> Class I = Evidence such as a carcass, skin, hair, photo, or confirmed tracks. Class II = Report reliable and detailed; reporting party experienced in outdoor activities; multiple parties. Class III = Report vague; description not a jaguar. See Jaguar Conservation Strategy for full definition of Classes.

## 2. New Mexico habitat report update – Michael Robinson

During discussions at the August 2004 habitat sub-committee meeting, it was decided that the draft New Mexico Habitat report needed to be updated to include criteria similar to the Arizona report. An additional meeting was held in Albuquerque, NM during August 31, 2004. Because of time constraints within NMDGF, the Center has provided GIS personnel to work on a draft report.

The timeline for completion of the New Mexico report is as follows: A draft will be available for sub-committee review by the end of August 2005; comments will be forwarded to the Center to make the necessary edits/changes; edited draft to the Habitat sub-committee for review; final draft presented to the Conservation Team as a whole.

**Action Item:** Anyone interested in participating in the Habitat sub-committee needs to contact Bill Van Pelt.

Current members in the Habitat Sub-committee include:

Bill Van Pelt, Chair	Tim Snow	Ben Brown
Don Cullum	Gary Helbing	Bill Moore
Lee Benson	Sarah Rinkevich	Craig Miller

Judy Keeler	Meira Gualt	Michael Robinson
Stephen Williams	Jeff Williamson	Warner Glenn
Cordy Cowan	Bill Cowan	Wendy Glenn
Tony Povalitis	Reese Woodling	Jimmy Stewart
Wally Murphy		

3. Kill Verification Activities (Section 5.H.2.) – Jack Childs

No depredation by jaguars on livestock has been reported.

4. Possible capture and radio-telemetry of a jaguar in Arizona – Group Discussion

Before the Team began discussions associated with potential capture of jaguars in Arizona, Terry Johnson explained AGFD's current position on the subject: *Absolutely no decision has been made whether or not to pursue capture and radio-collaring of jaguars in Arizona.* While the Department has a current USFWS permit to pursue, capture, and collar a jaguar, the decision to move forward with any attempts has not been made.

Terry provided the group with copies of a letter lining out the decision making process for risk assessment/capture. The process includes, but is not limited to, the following: 1) an assessment of potential capture methods, relative to safety of the jaguar itself as well as those who would be involved in a capture; 2) development of a capture protocol addressing each aspect of capture, handling, and release of a captured jaguar (including veterinary aspects, timing of capture efforts, and jaguar seasonal issues); 3) completion of a thorough description (i.e. a study design) of how monitoring a collared jaguar would be handled in terms of funding, staffing, techniques and approach, reporting, etc.; 4) review of the information from Steps 1, 2, and 3 by the Scientific Advisory Group; 5) consultations between the AGFD, NMDGF, USFWS, and any other appropriately knowledgeable people (i.e. other individuals with relevant "big cat" capture experience); 6) provide a briefing to the AGFD Director (Duane Shroufe) on the outcomes of Steps 1-5; and 7) Director Shroufe will, pursuant to the legal authorities that he carries, make the final decision. The goal is to have a recommendation package available by October.

Because the Depredation Committee has been charged with monitoring jaguars, sighting follow-ups, reported depredations, etc., the Committee also has been asked to review potential capture and handling methods and develop a Risk Assessment of the capture techniques that might be used. Handouts of the Committee's Risk Assessment were provided.

The Depredation Committee developed a Capture Guideline in 1997-98. These Guidelines mainly discussed pursuit of jaguars with hounds. The Committee modified the guidelines in 2002-2004 to update agency contacts and include recommendations by Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) Jaguar Conservation Program regarding capture and immobilization of jaguars. The WCS guidelines were developed by veterinarians with the

WCS Field Veterinary Program to provide a standardized and safe, ethical approach to capture, handling, and sampling protocols throughout the jaguar's range. Copies of the Guidelines have been provided to the veterinarians.

**Action Item:** The Depredation Committee will conduct a point-by-point assessment of the pros and cons associated with different study designs (questions to be answered) for gathering baseline information regarding jaguar movements, home ranges, presence/absence, males vs. females, etc.

**Action Item:** Make available to the JAGCT copies of the letter to the SAG regarding capture and radio-telemetry and the AGFD's USFWS permit/Section 6 Work Plan identifying capture and radio collaring of jaguar(s).

5. Samuel Wasser and Sandra Cavalcanti presentations.

The purpose of these presentations was not to present an either-or assessment of the methodology, but rather provide the JAGCT with a sense of the methods available for studying jaguars.

Samuel Wasser provided an overview of his projects using scat-locating dogs for bear and mountain lion research. The method could be applied to jaguar research (being done in Brazil), as dogs are trainable to detect species-specific scats. Information gained through this method includes: species, sex, and individual identification through DNA analysis; nutrition, reproductive status, and potential stressors through hormone analysis; parasite and disease pathogens; habitat requirements through diet analysis; and immunoglobulin analysis. Pros include: Non-invasive method to the study animal, cost- and time-effective coverage of large remote areas, and enhances sampling efficiency with minimal sampling bias. Dr. Wasser stated that this was not a catchall method and should be considered in conjunction with other methods (i.e. cameras and radio telemetry) depending on the questions asked. Costs to be considered include dogs (purchase and care), handler costs (approximately \$2500/month, 6 week minimum), and DNA analysis (\$80/sample).

Sandra Cavalcanti provided an overview of her jaguar monitoring study, which has included 34 captures and radio collaring of 17 individuals. Immobilization drugs used included Telazol and Ketamine, and veterinarian support was on-site. She has used both dogs and box traps for capture depending on the study site. During her studies, mountain lions have been more difficult to capture than jaguars.

During the discussion period following these presentations, a question was asked regarding the number of scats collected by the camera-monitoring project and if these could be analyzed. A student at the University of Arizona will be conducting the analysis, however, funding may be an issue. Terry Johnson offered a 2:1 match to anyone wishing to contribute to this analysis. Enough donations were collected to meet the \$7500 cost for finishing the analysis.

E. Other Business

1. Mexico Update – Terry Johnson

Terry announced that the AGFD continues to discuss jaguar/border-wildlife issues with Mexico, mainly through the Tri-lateral Committee (Committee comprised of government officials from US, Mexico, and Canada). Discussions have focused on meshing southern Mexico projects with Northern Mexico projects. The results of these discussions will be finalized at the Jaguar Congress meeting scheduled for October 12-14 2005 in Cuernavaca, Mexico.

**Action Item:** Provide an update/summary of the Jaguar Congress meeting at the October JAGCT meeting.

Craig Miller briefed the Team on the Northern Jaguar Project. The group purchased a 10,000-acre ranch in 2003 and is in the process of purchasing an additional 40,000 acres. To finalize the purchase, the group needs \$1.5 million within the next 3 years. If you wish to donate monies toward this effort, please contact Craig or Defenders of Wildlife.

2. Miscellaneous – Group

The Center for Biological Diversity has a jaguar slide presentation available. If you wish to use this, please contact Michael Robinson.

Reports of a jaguar killed south of the Arizona border, near Nogales, could not be confirmed at this time.

Concerns were raised regarding disturbance issues in the area of the recent photographs. The location information continues to be reported as broad and generic as possible. Specific locations have been provided to the landowner/land management agency and/or grazing lessee in the area. Borderlands are an attractant for a lot of wildlife groups including birders and reptile collectors. Most of the increase in visitors along the border may be attributed to border-crossers rather than increased interest from these wildlife groups.

F. Close Meeting

The meeting adjourned at approximately 4:00 p.m.

The next JAGCT meeting will be held **October 27-28, 2005** at the Douglas, AZ Convention Center, beginning at 9:30 AM. The meeting will be a 2-day meeting with one day devoted to re-establishing the conservation strategy and the second day for discussing normal business and potential-capture evaluation.